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Fish and Game Commission



MARINE RESOURCES COMMITTEE CA Fish and Game Commission

Committee Chairs: Commissioner Rogers and Commissioner Sutton

Meeting Summary

December 11, 2012
Southwest Fisheries Science Center
3333 North Torrey Pines Court
La Jolla, CA 92037-7003

Summary of MRC Recommendations:

- Potential for Limited fishery for red abalone at San Miguel Island
 - Recommend the Commission determine the current population status of red abalone at San Miguel Island does not meet the requirements of Alternative 8 of the Abalone Recovery and Management Plan (ARMP).
 - Recommend the Commission direct staff to work with the Department and stakeholders to develop a science-based peer reviewed process to address the outstanding questions related to density calculations, recruitment, and overall management approach outlined in the ARMP.

Meeting Summary

1. Introductions

Commissioners Rogers and Sutton convened the meeting with self-introductions from staff and attendees and an explanation of the ground rules for the meeting.

2. Informational updates

None

3. Discussion: Potential for Limited fishery for red abalone at San Miguel Island

- The Commission's Marine Advisor, Dr. Craig Shuman, provided an overview of the goals and structure of the meeting, critical decision points, background, and timeline of the project.
- Department Environmental Scientist, Dr. Laura Rogers-Bennett, provided an overview of recovery criteria in the ARMP, density methodology, rationale for triggers in the ARMP, and results of density surveys.
- On behalf of the California Abalone Marketing Association (CAMA), Dr. Jeremy Prince presented the constraints, uncertainty, risks and opportunities related to the CAMA San Miguel Island Red Abalone Proposal.
- Department Environmental Scientist, Ian Taniguchi, provided a status review of the red abalone population and the Marine Region's recommendation on the proposed fishery at San Miguel Island. The Marine Region recommended that the fishery not be re-opened due to densities below the levels established in the ARMP, sparse red abalone distribution in southern and central California, low recruitment, and the presence of disease.
- Input was received from representatives of the National Marine Fisheries Service, Channel Islands National Marine Sanctuary, Channel Islands National Park, Abalone Advisory Group, Recreational Abalone Advisory Committee, and stakeholders.

Discussion focused on the requirements of the ARMP, observed density of abalone at San Miguel Island, the risk and benefits associated with the proposed project, the value of engaging fishermen, scientists and stakeholders in management, and the uncertainty surrounding the management approach in the ARMP.

After discussion, the MRC determined it would recommend that the Commission not approve the proposed fishery at this time due to density estimates below the thresholds established in the ARMP. The MRC also expressed that it had several questions regarding the approach to abalone management outlined in the ARMP, especially the methodology for estimating abalone density and abundance. The MRC agreed to ask the Commission to direct staff to work with the Department and stakeholders to develop a science-based peer reviewed process to answer the outstanding questions and ensure abalone management in California is based on the best available science.

4. Meeting adjourned at 6:00 pm.